IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the Abstract with the following:

A method and apparatus for the detection of faces in a digital image captured under a variety of lighting conditions are provided. Rather than subjecting an entire image to computationally intensive face detection analysis, the image is subjected to computationally simple analysis to identify candidate pixels likely to be of skin colour. Only those pixels having such color are subject to computationally intensive face detection analysis. The pixels are selected by first selecting a color distribution model based on an image capture condition provided with the color digital image. Then, the color of the pixels is tested using the distribution model to determine those pixels having predominantly skin color. Preferably, the distribution model is selected from among a number of different distribution models with each of the distribution models associated with a different set of lighting conditions. In this way, a face detection process may accommodate a variety of lighting conditions associated with the capture of an image using a computationally simple analysis.